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Letter dated 26 September 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 22 September 2006, which I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

06-54020 (E) 290906

Annex

Letter dated 22 September 2006 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1510 (2003), I attach a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force covering the period from 1 April to 31 July 2006. I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jaap **de Hoop Scheffer**

Enclosure

Quarterly report to the United Nations on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force

Introduction

1. By resolution 1510 (2003) the Security Council requested the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to provide reports on the implementation of its mandate. This is the tenth such report by NATO and it covers the period from 1 April to 31 July 2006.

2. As at 31 July 2006, prior to the change of command of region South, ISAF had 10,177 personnel from 26 NATO countries and 535 from 10 non-NATO countries. It is expected that, with the change of command in the South, ISAF will have some 20,000 personnel by August 2006.

Overall security situation

3. ISAF has continued to execute its assistance mission in the north, west and capital regions through the conduct of regular framework operations. Joint security patrols with both the Afghan National Army and, to a lesser extent, the Afghan National Police have increased, while ISAF is firmly following the principle of Afghan national security forces being at the forefront.

4. Insurgent activity has increased markedly during the period with opposition forces proving capable of mounting tactically coordinated attacks in large numbers in the south and east. The trend over the last few months towards greater use of improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks is expected to continue and probably increase in number and geographic distribution.

5. ISAF, coalition forces and the Afghan national security forces are targeted but an increase in attacks on soft targets has also been noted, targeting the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to reach out into rural and remote areas by attacking schools, government officials, and non-governmental organizations. This tactic is likely to be intended to discredit international efforts to stabilize the country. Although outside the ISAF area of operations, southern and eastern Afghanistan have experienced a trend of increasing activity by opposing militant forces.

6. Insurgent activity has underlined an apparent intention to establish a persistent presence of opposing militant forces through violence and intimidation. The Government of Afghanistan intends to address local security concerns through the creation of an auxiliary police force to counter the insurgency at the local level.

Recent developments

7. In April 2006, the North Atlantic Council issued an Execution Directive for operation plan 10302-Rev1 and approved the associated rules of engagement, thereby authorizing the Supreme Allied Commander Europe to execute the plan as from 4 May 2006.

8. The transition from regional area coordinators to Regional Commands in the north and west has led to a more robust ISAF command and control structure.

Regional Command North and Regional Command West were successfully established on 1 June 2006.

9. Stage 3 expansion of the ISAF mission into the south and transfer of authority from Operation Enduring Freedom occurred on 31 July 2006.

10. The Kabul Multinational Brigade will have become Regional Command capital on 6 August 2006.

11. Stage 4 transfer of authority to Regional Command East will conclude Phase 2 entitled "Expansion". Stage 4 will occur upon the direction of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe when the necessary conditions have been met. This will complete the challenge of expanding ISAF to encompass all of Afghanistan with the intention of creating the conditions required for transition to Phase 3 entitled "Stabilization".

Security sector reform status

12. **Disbandment of illegal armed groups.** The capacity of the Government of Afghanistan to conduct disbandment enforcement is limited and the negotiation phase is likely to be extended, the enforcement contemplated only once conditions have been set. ISAF has provided national- and provincial-level planning and coordination support, monitoring of provincial operations and logistic support, including air transport for Government Ministers and international community officials to attend disbandment launch ceremonies. President Karzai's plan to recruit tribal fighters who will take their orders from the Government to safeguard the remote districts is raising concerns that this could undermine the disbandment programme. Reports of the creation of tribal militias in the south and east in response to deteriorating security have increased resistance to disbandment of illegal armed groups in the north and west. The Government's sometimes confusing assurances that the auxiliary police force will be under legitimate authority as it augments other security structures have not calmed the doubts of the local population. The ISAF Commander feels that bringing the auxiliary police force into organized groups under the purview of the Ministry of the Interior is acceptable as an interim solution and would facilitate disbandment when the time is right.

13. **Programme Takhim-e-Solh (Reconciliation).** Although Afghanistan-wide, this reconciliation programme focuses on the south and east of the country. Upon assuming responsibility for those regions, ISAF will support the programme within means and capabilities with an emphasis on information operations and in extremist support. So far some 1,600 Taliban and Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin members have been reconciled through the programme.

14. **Explosive remnants of war.** The purpose of this Afghan initiative is to safeguard authorized munitions in United Nations sites for future use by the Afghan national security forces and to dispose of unserviceable and unauthorized munitions. The Afghan New Beginnings Programme leads the implementation of this initiative and manages it on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. ISAF involvement in the initiative has been historically limited to a supporting role. However, given the increasing use of improvised explosive devices, ISAF has taken a more deliberate and proactive role in order to deny source materials and equipment to insurgents. ISAF has allocated resources and support to the Ministry of Defence and the New Beginnings Programme to facilitate centralized, controlled stockpiles of legitimate

ammunitions and has tasked Regional Command headquarters to conduct deliberate cache-locating operations.

15. **Counter-narcotics.** In May, the delivery mechanism of the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy was put in place with the founding of implementation committees chaired by the Afghan Ministry of Counter-Narcotics. The committees will publish implementation plans in September 2006. Work to disrupt drug-trafficking networks resulted in further convictions of traffickers and 10 tons of opiates were seized in May and June, although a sustained impact on the trade has yet to be achieved. Programmes to strengthen and diversify legal livelihoods continued. These included increased access to microcredit and employment although delivery has been severely hampered in areas of poor security. The Ministry produced the first Counter-Narcotics Communications Strategy and began the pre-planting information campaign late in July. This will seek to influence farmers' decisions on planting in the next season. It follows the 2006 eradication campaign which the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates destroyed around 15,000 hectares of opium poppy. The eradication campaign was marred by corruption and not all eradication took place within target areas.

16. **Afghan National Army.** The Afghan National Army continues to grow and develop. However, despite clear and well-pursued Afghan aspirations, further development is still hampered by a shortage of suitable equipment and reliance on external support. Developing the army must be seen as a long-term project. Balancing the need for operational effect with development of capabilities is a constant challenge. It is essential to ensure that the tasks that the Army undertakes are within its capabilities.

17. **Afghan National Police.** Progress in reforming the Afghan National Police is slow. The top two tiers of rank reform are now complete, although international community dissatisfaction with some of the second-tier nominations has required the initiation of a probationary process. The remaining rank and associated pay reforms are due to be completed in October 2006. Helping the police become an effective security force is a long-term project and mission success depends on international support for the activities that ISAF Regional Commands are seeking to implement. Proposals to improve the Provincial Reconstruction Team police adviser structure must be resourced as a matter of priority.

18. **Operational mentoring and liaison teams.** Starting with NATO expansion to the south, ISAF will enhance its role in Afghan National Army training through the establishment of operational mentoring and liaison teams throughout its area of operations. These teams are critical to the development of full operational capability of the Afghan National Army.

19. **Judicial reform.** Although some progress has been made in Afghanistan's formal justice system, the courts and prosecution services remain stigmatized by local distrust, corruption and resource depravation. Traditional dispute resolution mechanisms are still dominant especially in rural areas. The ISAF Commander participates in justice and human rights working groups. Regional Commands and Provincial Reconstruction Teams are gradually establishing legal advisers, and experts in institution- and capacity-building.

20. **Synergy between ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom.** ISAF expansion has enhanced the close cooperation between ISAF and Operation Enduring

Freedom. In the months leading up to transfer of authority Stage 3, coordination between ISAF headquarters and Regional Command South has been particularly sound. Additionally, the need to coordinate operations between Regional Command West, in Farah and Ghor Provinces, and Operation Mountain Thrust in Regional Command South has set up procedures, mutual support and active liaison.

21. **Provincial coordination centres.** The updated role of the provincial coordination centres is to integrate Afghan national security forces and local governance security functions into a single operations centre in each province. This permits closer cooperation and also more effective control and situational awareness for provincial governors. Fourteen provincial coordination centres already exist mainly in Regional Commands South and East. Combined Forces Command Afghanistan has directed the re-energizing of plans to establish a provincial coordination centres in each province. ISAF is fully engaged in the planning and considers governors as crucial in helping to achieve the mission end-state.

22. **Expansion.** Over the reporting period, ISAF has been focused on transition to the expansion to the south.

Neighbouring countries

23. **Tripartite Commission.** ISAF headquarters has taken part as a full member in the meetings of the Tripartite Commission since 6 June 2006. The aim of the Commission is to establish an enduring and mutually beneficial Afghanistan-Pakistan security relationship that contributes to regional stability. Composed of representatives from the Afghan and Pakistani military staffs, it convenes every two months with Combined Forces Command Afghanistan. This is a fundamental part of the ISAF mission as the Tripartite Commission directly promotes regional security and stability. Steady but slow progress has been made on cooperation in a number of areas, including initiatives to improve communications between border forces. ISAF will play an increasing role in Commission proceedings before assuming the lead from Combined Forces Command Afghanistan late in 2006.

24. **Border security policy.** ISAF is developing an enhanced mutual understanding of the NATO engagement strategy with Afghanistan's neighbours. ISAF support to the Afghan integrated border security policy at the operational level consists of contacts with in-country diplomats in order to facilitate military to military liaison with neighbouring countries. ISAF also participates in the border meetings supporting the Tripartite Commission. At the tactical level, Regional Commands have been tasked to establish military to military contacts with border units of the neighbouring countries.

Summary

25 ISAF continues to make solid progress in accomplishing its mission and good coordination with Operation Enduring Freedom. However, there are significant challenges that will need to be overcome in the next few months both in terms of expansion and in meeting security threats. This includes addressing public dissatisfaction with the perceived slow pace of reconstruction, good governance, absence of a viable option to replace poppy cultivation, and criminal activity.